

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Opening dinner Session

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Free Public Library, Newark, N. J.
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Great joy at being invited to return after six years' absence

Pleasant memories of the first three years of this International exper.

...after a number of years working at bridging gulfs among the peoples
of our own nation

Note from your program that you are to explore the intricacies of Human Relations through the several disciplines of Psychology, Anthropology, Group behavior and modern problem solving

This is as it should be...as a first step in destroying one of ~~life's~~ most widely held illusions, viz. that human relations understanding is every man's realm of expertise!!!

Time spent in Resolving the mysteries of the phys. universe - virtually none to understand the complexities of human mind & spirit.

During this coming week you will be engaged here in pursuit of one of life's simplest, yet most complex and difficult of situations; i.e. understanding of the relations of people to people, against the resistance of handicaps imposed by centuries of taboos and wall-building between us and our neighbors.

This workshop is guided by the same principles upon which United Nations organization was founded, namely: motivation by a universal faith exhibited by the common people of the world that peace can and will be found in the hearts of the common people....

because it resides

....people who want to and can live and let live.

Here then, is a small replica of the larger world; but a replica that becomes a laboratory in which we start by sharing in common the one, undivided, sheltered environment; bound by a common quest for enlightenment and peaceful surroundings; governed by a very few, simple expectations or regulations; safe from the critical, perhaps accusing eyes of our "big world" contemporaries who demand a plethora of rules and laws, as well as obedience to tribal loyalties and taboos; guided only by a basic desire to find friendships, contentment and understanding in this an unthreatened and unthreatening environment - a world of our own.

Sheltered: No need for politics, economic rivalry, competition for status or power

Here, for one week, we are free - nay, encouraged - to explore the closets where are hidden the skeletons of Fear and Prejudice - to determine, not IF, but how much, each of us is influenced in our every day lives by the lessons of suspicion and distrust with which our minds and the minds of those who have preceded us, ^{have} ~~are~~ clouded throughout our lives!

as what worried our nations "rank"

Make no mistake - the major human conflicts in history have had their genesis in the minds of leaders whose superstitions, suspicions, centuries' old animosities and mis-guided loyalties, have directed their actions into channels of belligerence ^{hostility and}

~~These so-called national traditions from out of the past, have rationalized illegal grabbings for power, with the handy support of these subjective impulses and promptings.~~

If there ever is to be peace among men, it will be only when more and more of the leaders - and the potential leaders of men in every culture - will have taken time to learn the simple lesson ~~which~~ to which we shall be exposed only superficially during this week.

Still often that:

What a wonderful thing if one or more of the ~~workshop~~ ^{workshop} were drafted into positions of leadership in his or her nation, that this concept might take root & flourish throughout the world

Each of you recognizes the startling, dreadful fact, that our scientists of all the world have found this unity of spirit and purpose years and years ago - long before the Curie's, the Einstein

They, working in harmony and objective exchange of basic knowledge, have harnessed the power of the universe in a manner undreamed of in the dark Middle Ages. (computer problem)

So efficiently have they wrought that today man is in possession of a destructive power that, in the hands of a madman, could destroy the planet and the last vestiges of man's civilization.

And this power is so frightening to all of us, because deep in our hearts we recognize that we know so little, and practice so seldom, a science of constructive human relations, that the formula for the security of our planet is not in our possession.

We can and may destroy ourselves because we have cared so little about saving ourselves!

But back to you and me!!!!.

I wonder how many of us here have ever tried working on a check-list, just for one day, to test the degree to which our actions are influenced, even guided, by impulses, habits, dislikes and fears that are without rational foundation. e.g.

1. Toothpaste - fears induced by "hard-sell" advertising; "only one cavity" or the love-interest "where whiteness counts"

Clothing - bright or dull - where the beginning (My mother - fool, gypsy)

Soul Food (for every culture!) that and only that without sampling, testing, broadening taste (Spinach - carrots - "Eat it - ginger ale")

Periodicals and Newspapers - reaching only that which speaks my thoughts voices my philosophy....without reading the other opinions as test of the validity of my own!

People: Entering a public carrier (bus, train, plane) "No, pass this one; pass that one; this one OK" - on what basis, by what criteria ~~xxxxxxBiiiiixxxxxx~~ (my practice on plane - find empty to avoid ???)

On the job: don't like him, her, them - like only these Why? What incident caused it if any (me and Bill Herrick)

Social encounters: Whom do we seek out, cultivate on first sight; whom do we automatically avoid meeting? Why? (Southern accent, my early taboo)

Analysis would find:

1. Custom, social habits of environment, some call it Tradition
2. Miseducation & misinformation - first impulses influenced by attitudes of authority figures and peer groups - then by what we expose ourselves to or avoid exposures to; in personal contact, literature, discussions, etc.

3. The Fears and Insecurities that assail us - whether by actual unhappy person-to-person encounter, or incident by proxy through friend or associate .. or even more compelling, the manifestation of buried emotional insecurity that must find a scapegoat or excuse for our weakness.

Expectation:

4. The inevitable result of taking advantage of any person toward whom these irrational impulses point our attention. Thus guilt handily provides for us all the rationalizations by which man has justified his mistreatment of other men.

My last year ~~the~~ year 1948 "Minorities of the World"

This small laboratory, comprised of distinctly individual souls, personalities, physical, intellectual and emotional beings of every variety and degree of difference, are assembled here in an experiment.

at least ~~one~~ among you, ^{a young man from Down Under representing many cultures} several years ago, came in a spirit of disbelief. He stayed to carry on the work. ^{Karl Levitt.} Many of you, doubtlessly, will here be taking the first serious, analytical assessment of yourselves, aided and abetted by members of your current peer group.

This of course, is the first component in ^{conventional} any attempt to see and assess, clearly and honestly, our neighbor. The ancient admonition, KNOW THYSELF starts here.

Hopefully it will be a heartening, challenging, stimulating and continuing experience. Healthy human relations demands this little of us.

Congrats to Sylvia who has been a model of consistency & persistency in perpetuating this noble idea

- ~~and~~ to The staff assembled
- and to you, the participants, upon your selection for this experience.